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THE RED SPIRIT.

(FOR THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.)

"A sad tale's best for winter;—
I have one of sprights and goblins."
WINTER'S TALE, Act II. Scene I.

It was a fine morning in January, in the year one thousand five hundred and ———, that the governor of an inconsiderable castle, on the marches of O'Byrne's country, was awakened by his son, a child of about seven years old, to tell him that he saw from the window a number of strange looking people, approaching from the direction of the mountains. "What kind of people, boy?" demanded the governor starting up, "are they cased in armour?" "No, papa," replied the boy, "they have no armour, but as well as I can discern, they have bright yellow garments." "By St. George," exclaimed the governor, rushing out, "the O'Byrnes are upon us. What! ho! to arms, to arms—the foe, the foe!"

But it was too late, an advanced party of the enemy had already surprised the castle; and having first contrived to transfix the careless sentinel (who had slept in his cups) with as many arrows as sufficed to prevent him from being ever able to tell tales, a few of them contrived to steal in through a badly secured window. With the assistance of these, their comrades outside, soon forced open the gate; and their shrill war-cry, as they rushed into the hall, replied to the ill-timed commands of the governor.

The inmates of the castle, however, though hastily collected, made a gallant defence; but the arrival of the reserve party of the O'Byrnes, headed by no less a personage than Phelim Mac Hugh, the celebrated "mountain king," turned the scale of victory in favour of the assailants; and the sun that shed his wintery beam on St. George's flag, as it gaily floated in the morning breeze, beheld from his meridian tent of purple grey clouds, its place occupied by the banner of that extraordinary chief, who was for thirty years the terror of government, although living almost in its immediate vicinity. I must, however, do the assailants the justice to mention that they used their victory with great moderation. Not a drop of blood was shed from the moment the castle surrendered, and the inmates were not only treated with lenity, but even with kindness; but for all this, the mountain warriors did not neglect to appropriate to themselves every thing valuable in the castle, acting no doubt on the maxim of war afterwards adopted by Hudibras towards the vanquished astrologer—

"I give you quarter; but your pillage,
The conquering warrior's crop and tillage,
Which with his sword he reaps and plows—
That's mine the law of arms allows."

On the following day the chief of the O'Byrnes returned to his dwelling in the mountains, with the greater part of his clan, leaving the rest to protect the castle; all the prisoners accompanied him, with the exception of one, who, although the poorest man in the castle, had alone, of all its defenders, as much money in his immediate possession (being the amount of his good luck at a gaming table in Dublin a few evenings before), as the victors deemed an equivalent for his freedom—this was one Ralph Goldthorn, a Londoner by birth, and a "poor gentleman," by profession, as indeed his well darned hose, and the hue of his velvet doublet, changed by long wear from dark blue to azure, proclaimed him at first sight—who having wasted his youthful patrimony in dissipation, entered the army, and after mounting many a breach, and helping to change the colour of many a "tented field" from green to red, returned to England as poor a man as he set out—the bounties of Mars being soon lavished at the shrine of Bacchus. He had come to Ireland a few weeks before, "claimed kindred" with the governor of the castle, whose capture we have just described, and had his claim allowed; for in the days of good Queen Bess it was not so difficult a matter for a man like Goldthorn to "live on his friends," as in the present age of refinement, when most men choose their friends by the length of their purses.

Goldthorn was about to depart from the castle on the morning after it surrendered to the O'Byrnes, when he received a pressing invitation from Rory Oge O'Byrne,

the commander of the new garrison, and a near kinsman of Phelim Mac Hugh, to remain as long as he pleased, which he the more readily accepted, as he had few such friends as the ci-devant governor in Ireland. Moreover, he loved the good cheer and deep potations of the new master of the castle. Rory Oge was a being of much light and shade; he was young, (as his name implied) handsome, gay, generous and brave; but on the other hand, he was a hard drinker, and extremely capricious and quarrelsome. He, however, agreed remarkably well with Goldthorn, who possessed a very even temper, was able to drink his host under the table, and could entertain him with stories innumerable, of foreign lands, battles and sieges; in relating which, he was an admirable adept in selecting his materials from the world of fiction, when the world of reality ceased to afford them. In the mean time the foray of the O'Byrnes having reached the ears of government, a considerable force was sent to dispossess the mountain warriors of their new strong-hold; but being foiled in several attempts to surprise the castle, through the address and vigilance of Rory Oge, the English commander deemed it more advisable to encamp his little army at some distance, (yet not too far for observation) with a view of obliging the Irish either to surrender for want of provisions, or come out and fight on more equal ground.

It happened on one night, as Goldthorn sat drinking with Rory Oge, and a few others of his sept who could understand English, that having exhausted his entire stock of *real* adventures, he had recourse to *imaginary* ones for the entertainment of his audience, and accordingly commenced relating such a series of improbabilities, as had Baron Munchausen been then in existence, would have thrown that Utopian traveller completely into the shade. "I have been," said he, "in Araby, where the sun is so near the earth, that I have often lit a candle with its rays; and in Egypt, a country governed by a queen called Sphinx, who is half a woman, half beast, with the wings of a bird. Not to speak of my encounter with a fiery dragon in the land of the Æthiops—my escape from shipwreck in the Baltic sea, on the back of a kraken, or sea-serpent—or my ascent of Mount Etna, one of the entrances of hell; through a chink in which I could see Beelzebub and his whole conclave of devils, red, black, and blue—but all this is nothing to what I saw outside this castle a few nights ago."

The simple mountaineers, accustomed from their infancy to stories of fairies and magicians, heard all these lies with the most implicit credulity; and now that he was about to mention something which occurred so near, they bent forward with gaping mouths, and breathless attention to hear the sequel. "Wot ye not," said Goldthorn, "of the fellow who possessed the rath, on the site of which this castle was built?" "Aye do we," replied Rory Oge, "he was called in Irish, Donnai na goun laun, which signifies Donald of the blue steel; and a devilish brave fellow he was—it gave the Saxon churls some work to dispossess him; they cut off his head for spite, because he attempted to set the fort on fire over their heads, after having surrendered;—but no matter—with the blessing of our lady, we shall have many a head for his ere long. My curse on the race of the stranger, root and branch." Goldthorn, who well knew that Rory's rising petulance, was a sure symptom that the "thief," which he had "put into his stomach," was rapidly ascending "to steal away his brain," took no notice of his offensive manner and language, but proceeded with his story. "By my foes," continued he, "it must be this very Daniel, the long worm, or whatever you call him, that I saw. On the night to which I have alluded, having indulged somewhat too freely in strong waters, I thought a walk in the cool night air would be of service. After taking a turn or two before the castle, I was astonished mightily to see a tall figure suddenly start up before me; but what was my horror, when I perceived that it wanted a head from the neck. You all may be sure that I instantly took to my heels; nor have I ever since ventured outside the castle after sun-set."

As Goldthorn concluded, "the pallid mantle of fear" (to use the elegant language of the tales of the Genii,) descended on every face present, except Rory's, who had now too much *spirits within* to have any fear of *spirits*

without ; but there was one person present on whom the Englishman's story made a particular impression. This was a Gallowglass named Angus Dubh, or dark Æneas O'Carroll, than whom a handsomer youth never danced of a bright summer's eve, among the blue-eyed daughters of Glendalough ; or a more daring spirit never went to the wars of Phelim Mac Hugh : I may safely say, that he feared no man *living* ; but that he feared no man *dead*, is an assertion in which the melancholy sequel of my narrative would not bear me out. It is therefore not to be wondered at, if the sound of the castle bell was peculiarly unwelcome to Angus Dubh, as striking twelve, just as Goldthorn had finished, it announced the hour when it fell to his turn to relieve the sentinel outside. His pride, however, prevailed against his fears, and he went forth without uttering a word of remonstrance. It was a dark and tempestuous night :—the winds were rocking the surrounding trees, and moaning among their leafless boughs : large masses of watery clouds were drifted athwart the face of a starless sky ;—and a drizzling rain, blown right in his face, was alone sufficient to prevent Angus from discerning objects very distinctly, even if Chimerian darkness did not envelope all things. This last circumstance tended to give him some courage, for he very philosophically concluded, that it would be very hard for him to see a ghost when he could not see his hands ; and, accordingly, having devoutly recommended himself to Patrick, Bridget, and Columkill, he determined very wisely to put all ideas of the *supernatural* out of his head, and to turn his thoughts to what was very *natural*, his approaching nuptials with Kathleen O'Dempsey, one of the prettiest lasses in the valley of the Seven Churches. He had already entered into many a gay dream of future happiness, and constructed many an airy tower of hope—"when the bell in the castle tolled one." Away flitted all his pleasing visions, as this hour of spectres brought Goldthorn's appalling narrative more vividly than ever to his mind.

But we must leave him for awhile, and return to the party inside, who had all this time continued in high was-sail until they—that is to say, Rory Oge, and Goldthorn, (for all the other inmates of the castle, with the exception of a few below stairs, who sat "like sacrifices by their fires of watch," were buried asleep,) made the unpleasant discovery that their bottle of aquavite was out, but they should have more ; Goldthorn declared that if he took not another cup, sleep would never visit his eyes that night ; and Rory swore that if he did not get more drink he would set the castle on fire. The sagacity of the former, however, soon hit upon an expedient which supplied their lack. From the time the castle was invested by the English forces, Goldthorn had observed a strict neutrality, and unlike many who adopt a similar line of conduct, he preserved the friendship of both parties. He had continued, from time to time, to hold conferences with reconnoitering parties from the British camp, unknown to the Irish sentinels ; among one of these parties he recognised an old fellow soldier, who told him "that being indifferent well supplied with aquavite, a bottle should be at his service whenever he could procure a trusty messenger." He now availed himself of his friend's offer—a messenger was procured—in less than half an hour the bottle of aquavite sparkled on the table,—and the first cup set Rory Oge completely free from the long relaxed reins of sobriety. Now, it was Rory's misfortune that he never yet got drunk without also getting into a quarrel. Heretofore he had, even in his cups, so far preserved his national courtesy to strangers, as not to quarrel with his guest, but contented himself with attacking one of his own people, who knowing the humour of his leader, indulged with a show of resistance ; but all the Irish in the room being fast asleep, the temptation presented by Goldthorn, a national enemy, and one who had fought hard on the day the castle was taken, was too powerful for Rory to resist. Accordingly, the little wits which the aquavite left him, were instantly set to work, in order to find a proper cause of quarrel ; but when a man is once determined to fight, he will never be at a loss for an occasion. Rory Oge, instantly commenced giving the lie direct to all his guest's marvellous relations. "Harkye, master Saxon," said he, "do you imagine me such a fool,

as to believe all your lying tales ? egad, you were no more in Araby than I was ;—you fight a dragon—egad ! a good cut would make you run like the wind—not to say a dragon—that if he only snorted, would blow you into atoms. Pah ! I suppose you think me drunk—to think such lies can go down with me ;—and as to hell—sure any one knows—that if such a scant-o'-grace as you, were to go so near the devil as you say—why, he would never let you back to vend lies in Ireland." "Why, may I never eat mutton," replied Goldthorn, "an' I have not told you verity." "You shall never eat mutton here again, nor beef neither," replied Rory, "for by the hand of my father you shall quit to-night, and I'll set every dog in the castle after you—I faith you shall be in sadder plight than when on mount—mount—oh, curse on it—where the fire is. I'll so beat you this moment, that you shall be a greater wonder to look at, than the Spinnet, or Spinnix, or whatever you call the fellow in Egypt, or the—the—pah ! the fellow in the red sea, or whatever sea—hang him—what care I who or where he is ; I warrant me, whatever he is, he could not give you such a blow as this." So saying, he made a hundred pieces of the aquavite bottle on the head of Ralph Goldthorn. I have already remarked that Goldthorn possessed a good temper ; but like many well tempered men, he was of a nature which once roused was not easy to be subdued. Springing up, (for the blow had prostrated him) his face wet with aquavite and blood, he drew his sword, and exclaimed, "Rory O'Bryne, I call you a coward and a braggart : if you possess a spark of courage, I demand instant satisfaction for the insult which you have given me." "Satisfaction you shall have, false Saxon—and so will I," replied Rory, unsheathing his sword, overturning the table and staggering forward ; "depend upon it," continued he, "you'll find me a worse antagonist than the dragon. If you can ever come from where I'll send you presently, you will be able to say with truth that you saw Beelzebub." In the next instant the steel of the Gael and the Saxon clashed together in combat—but poor Rory was not so good as his threats—before a dozen blows were exchanged, he dropt lifeless on the floor,—not, however, beneath the sword of his adversary ; but from a shot that was fired into the room. The report of the shot awoke the mountaineers ; they quickly started up ; but ere they could seize their arms, the room was filled with British soldiers, and they were made prisoners. Goldthorn, being well known among the soldiers, found no difficulty in getting down stairs, where he found the royal forces in complete possession of the castle. All the Irish were prisoners, except a few, who being awake on the entrance of the English, lost their lives in making a brave but fruitless resistance. But how the English could have surprised the castle, was still a mystery to Goldthorn ; and he was about to make inquiry, when two harquebusiers entered, bearing between them the seemingly lifeless body of Angus Dubh. On examination, no wound could be discovered on the body of Angus ; and after a short time his senses slowly returned ; but his intellect appeared disordered, and he gazed intently on one spot, as if viewing some object invisible to others.

I shall now proceed to acquaint the reader with what befel O'Carroll. The castle bell tolling one, as has been already mentioned, put all matrimonial visions to flight ; the vague fears which succeeded, were soon increased as he beheld a distant light advancing towards him. As it came, however, from the direction of the English quarters, his fears for awhile struggled against his apprehensions ; and thinking that it might be a spy, he laid down his battle-axe, and stringing an arrow to his bow, prepared to take aim ; but he soon dropped bow and arrow, and dropped himself after them, on his knees, as on the nearer approach of the light, he perceived it to be a column of bright red fire. Trembling and breathless, yet unable to avert his face, he awaited the coming of the phantom ; but as it drew nearer, his senses completely forsook him, when he made the horrible discovery, that it was a walking headless body, enveloped in flames and blood. A reconnoitering party of the English soon discovered that the Irish sentinel was not at his post ; encouraged by this circumstance, they ventured to approach the castle, when one of them stumbled over the senseless Gallowglass. Believ-

ing him to be dead, they immediately carried the intelligence to their commander—who instantly led his men towards the castle, which they surprised in precisely the same manner, as the Sept of the O'Byrnes did a few weeks before. The account of the apparition was obtained with great difficulty from the unfortunate Gallowglass, on the transient return of his senses. He shortly after became delirious; and ere the sun arose, poor Angus O'Carrol was no more. The "Red Spirit" had deprived him of reason and of life.

Many years after the period of this tale, there died at the residence of the celebrated Bishop Bedell, a venerable old man, who had been, for some time before, a pensioner on the worthy prelate's bounty. This man was much esteemed in the household of the bishop, for his upright conduct, and entertaining conversation; and many an evening did he entertain the domestics with stories of his earlier years—"for he had been a soldier in his youth;" but he ever referred to that period with a sigh, as time mispent in vanity and vice. He often spoke on the evil of lying, as an example of which he would relate the story of the Red Spirit. "It was not until long after," said he, "that I came to know how I had, by idle and pernicious tales, been accessory to the poor, simple, wild Irishman's death. The messenger whom I sent to the English encampment for the aquavite, was an old woman who had followed the O'Byrnes to the castle. In consequence of the intense darkness she carried a light, which on her return the high wind obliged her to keep beneath her crimson mantle, the hood of which she drew over her face, in order to avoid the rain—as long wear had given it a degree of transparency—that, with the assistance of the light, enabled her to see perfectly well through it; and the superstitious sentinel, his mind being filled with phantasies wild and terrifying, took this old wife for a spectre such as I had described; the consequence whereof, was, that he was so affrighted as to lose his life."

It is almost unnecessary to add, that this old man's name was Ralph Goldthorn. IOTA.

LYON, BISHOP OF CORK.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.

SIR—In p. 327, No. 41 of your very useful and entertaining publication you have given an account of Bishop Lyon, (for Lyons, I presume, was a mistake of your printer,) whom you designate as "a remarkable bishop of Cork." I should like very much to know from the person who furnished you with that anecdote, or from yourself, what the authority for the statement is. I have heard the story before, but have never been able to get any good reason for believing it. I have seen the picture to which you refer in the Bishop of Cork's palace; it represents him certainly as wanting a finger; he is dressed, however, not in a naval uniform, as you have stated, but in a very scholar-like black gown. This little piece of inaccuracy, therefore, throws some suspicion over the whole story, especially as the account given by Ware is at variance with it in almost every part. In the first place, it appears from Ware that Bishop Lyon was vicar of Naas in 1573, vicar of Bandonston in 1580, and chaplain to Lord Grey, who came over as Lord Deputy in September, 1580. This is therefore apparently inconsistent with your statement that Queen Elizabeth took him from the quarter-deck to make him a bishop: he was at least in holy orders, and in possession of preferment in Ireland nearly ten years before he was raised to the highest order of the ministry. If therefore he was ever distinguished for gallantry in naval warfare, it must have been before the year 1573. But how is this to be reconciled with your account, that it was in action against the Spaniards that he attracted the Queen's attention to his merits? Surely no action with the Spaniards could have taken place prior to the year 1577.

Ware does not seem to have considered the Bishop as "remarkable," for any thing except such virtues and qualities as well became his order. The story of his sermon I know not where you got, and should be much obliged by your referring me to your authority. According to Ware, Bishop Lyon was first appointed to the see of Ross in 1582; in 1583, the sees of Cork and Cloyne were

given to him in commendam, and in 1586, the three sees were formally united in his person. He appears to have been an active and public-spirited man; although his income was small, (his bishoprics then being worth only £200 a year) he built a house at Ross, which cost him £300; and on its being burned by the rebels, he built another at Cork, on which he laid out £1000 of his own money. In the year 1595, he was appointed one of the Commissioners to consider the best means of peopling Munster with English settlements, and of establishing a voluntary composition throughout that province in lieu of cess and taxes: this does not look as if he was an illiterate captain of a ship. Besides this, we have the testimony of Primate Bramhall, (quoted by Ware,) "that Cork and Ross fared the best of any bishoprick in that province, a very good man, Bishop Lyon, having been placed there early in the Reformation." T.

The article above commented on, was sent us by a contributor, and was, as we supposed, original. On inquiry, however, we find that it was but an extract from a miscellaneous compilation called Jefferson's Selections, published in York in the year 1795. In that work the article is given as an extract from an old newspaper, which gave oral tradition as its sole authority. We are but little prone to the re-publication of mere extracts, and should not have given insertion to the article in question if we had been aware that it was not original. We have however in this instance no reason to regret the circumstance, as it has called forth the satisfactory evidences furnished by our correspondent of its want of historic truth.—ED.

THE WILD GEESE.

FOR THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.

I well remember, in my boyish time,
Once in the noon of some late autumn day,
When flowers had died, and all the woods grew sere:
I stood abroad, and gazed upon a flight
Of wild-geese, thro' the dark blue depth aloft,
Steering their skyeey voyage high in heaven;
As if from some far realm, to realm afar—
For their wild notes came down th' etherial steep
Even as the music of some foreign land.

It now seems strange: yet from that very hour
The love of travel entered in my soul.
These fowls, thought I, are last from India,
Or broad Euphrates, and the Persian streams,
And seek the populous empire of the Czar.
Haply the smooth Cayster's song-lov'd stream,
Or reedy Mincius, last hath laved their plumes;
Or from the vale where sweet Meander winds,
Or ancient Peneus glides—they took their way.

How gloriously they steer their fleet free flight
Thro' the thin azure! with their snowy wings,
Like specks of sunshine, starring the dark vault,
Sublimely high; far seen from many a vale,
And many a mighty city as they pass,
Making aerial music in mid heaven.

And O! the wild and lovely scenes and sights
They from on high survey! What shores and seas,
What summer islands yet untrod by man,
What woods, what lonesome lakes, what deserts wild,
Tanned mountain sides, and deeply shaded vales,
Hamlet, and town, and tower, and populous realm,
The bright South's empire, and the sunless North,
All swiftly roll beneath their travell'd sight.
And now they linger, now they journey on,
As fancy guides, and uncontrolled by laws.

'Twere a fair sight to see their baiting-place
That last lone spot—for lone the place must be
Where yon far flight shall rest: Or where at morn
They rose with sounding pinion, winding up,
The marbled steep upon their airy way.

J. U.

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